

REMARKS

Applicants and their attorney wish to express their gratitude to both Examiner Hill and Examiner Zalukaeva for the courtesy and assistance they extended during the recent personal interview. As stated on the interview summary record, although no agreement was reached, Examiner Hill suggested to define the terms more clearly such that the flaps extend beyond an outermost lateral periphery of the front portion. Examiner Hill also suggested that the front portion be defined better and that the independent claims should recite a differential basis weight. Both Examiner Hill and Examiner Zalukaeva indicated that such amendments would most likely define around the cited references, namely Mesek.

In response to the interview, claims 1 and 63 have been amended. Claim 1 now states that the middle portion is narrower than the front portion and that the front portion extends from a front edge of the absorbent structure to the narrower middle portion. The claim also states that the front portion defines an outermost lateral periphery and that the flaps, when in an unfolded state, extend beyond the outermost lateral periphery of the front portion. The claim has further been amended to state that the middle portion has a basis weight where the lateral flaps have been folded that is at least twice the basis weight of the front portion where the folded flaps are not present.

As discussed during the interview, the absorbent structure as defined in claim 1 provides various benefits and advantages over the absorbent structure disclosed in Mesek. For instance, by having the flaps wider than the outermost lateral periphery of the front portion, the flaps can be easily engaged during production of the absorbent article and folded over onto the middle portion of the absorbent structure. In particular, since the flaps are wider than the front portion, stationary folding guides can be used to easily find and fold the flaps.

In addition, Mesek teaches the use of a rectangular absorbent structure. As also discussed during the interview, a rectangular structure has certain geometric limitations.

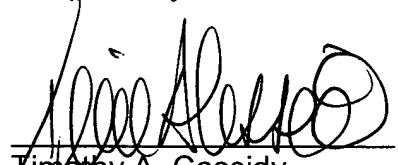
Consideration of independent claim 63 is also requested. Claim 63 states in addition to claim 1 that the lateral flaps extend substantially the entire length of the absorbent structure. An example of an absorbent structure as defined in claim 63 is shown in Figure 20. As discussed during the interview, by having the lateral flaps extend substantially the entire length of the absorbent structure, the folded flaps provide excess absorbent material in the front portion and the rear portion of the absorbent structure where greater absorbent capacity may be required in some products.

In summary, it is believed that the claims as currently amended patentably define over the prior art of record and are in complete condition for allowance. Should any further issues remain, however, then Examiner Hill is invited and encouraged to telephone the undersigned at her convenience.

12/1/05

Date

Respectfully submitted,



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